

James River and Kanawha Canal:

Ben Salem Lock  
Lexington vicinity  
Rockbridge County  
Virginia

HAER No. VA-21

HAER

VA,

82-LEX.V,

1A-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D. C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

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James River and Kanawha Canal: Ben Salem Lock

HAER No. VA-21

Location: Lexington vicinity, Rockbridge County, Virginia

Date of Construction: c. 1859

Builder/Designer: North River Navigation Company

Original Owner: North River Navigation Company

Present Owner: Unknown

Original Use: Canal

Present Use: Abandoned

Significance: Located on the western bank of the Maury River (formerly the North River) approximately 1 mile downstream from its junction with the South River, the Ben Salem Lock is constructed out of rough and smooth cut granite laid up in a running bond. According to Dr. William Trout, III, the Ben Salem Lock was part of a canal system designed to link Lexington, Virginia, with the James River. Construction of this system began following the organization of the North River Navigation Company in 1841 and continued until 1858 when the still unfinished works were bought by the James River and Kanawha Company. Following this transaction, work on the canal was reinstituted and, by 1862, the route was navigable and complete. Dr. Trout states that the Ben Salem Lock was built circa 1859.

Transmitted by: Jean Yearby, HAER, 1984, from information provided by Dr. William Trout